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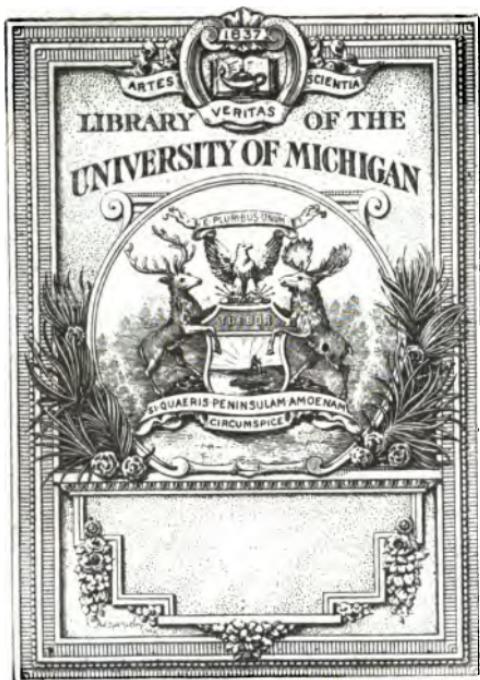
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# RATIONAL THEOLOGY

REV. JOHN MILTON WILLIAMS, D. D.

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- III. Virtue, from a Scientific Stand-point.
- IV. Regeneration.
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- VI. The Atonement.
- VII. The Future of Incorrigible Men.
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# THE OLD TESTAMENT AND THE CRITICS.

BY

*REV. JOHN MILTON WILLIAMS, D. D.*

Author of "The Empire of the Pulpit," "Rational Theology," Etc.

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*Sub hoc Signo Vinces.*

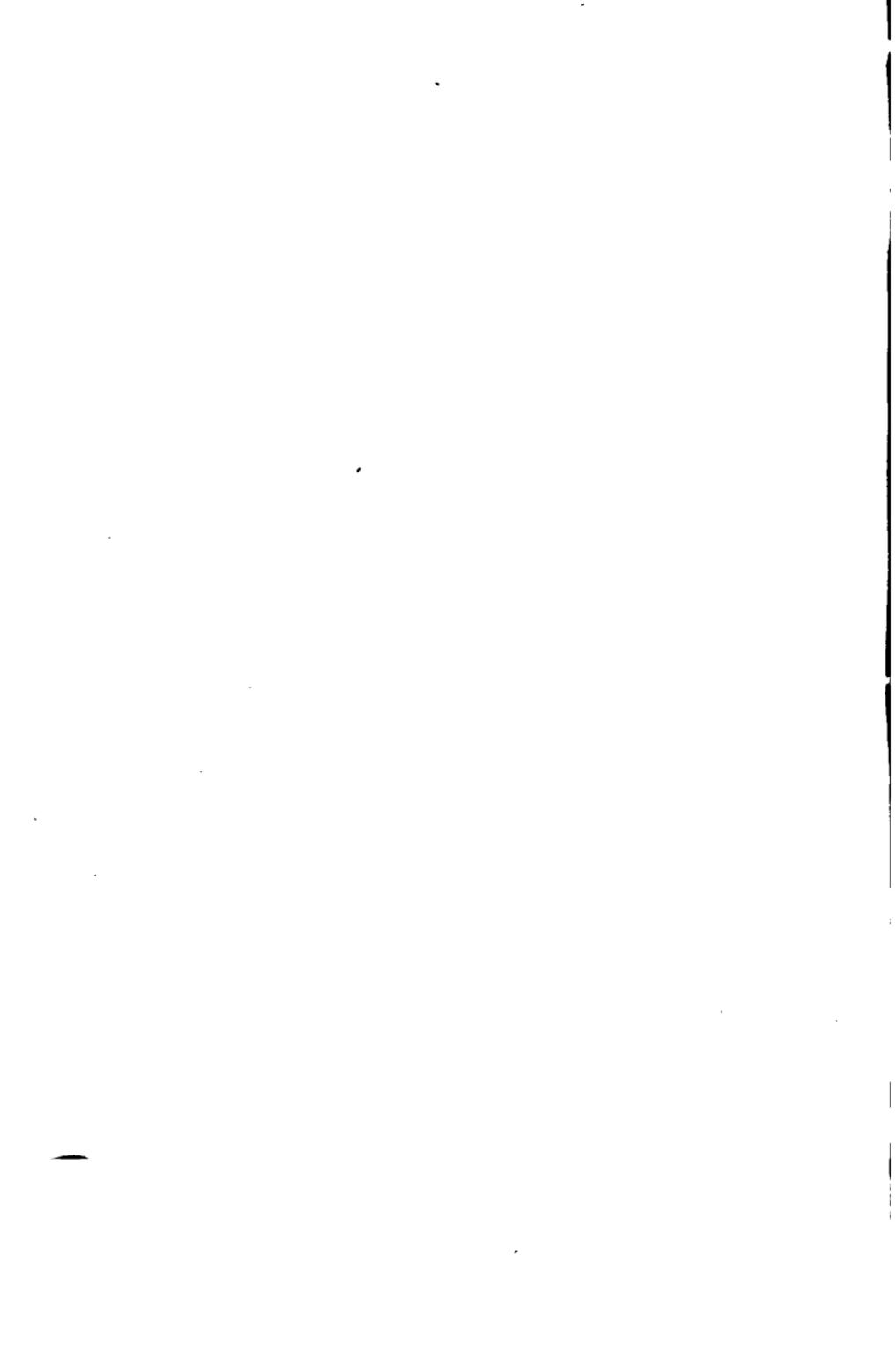
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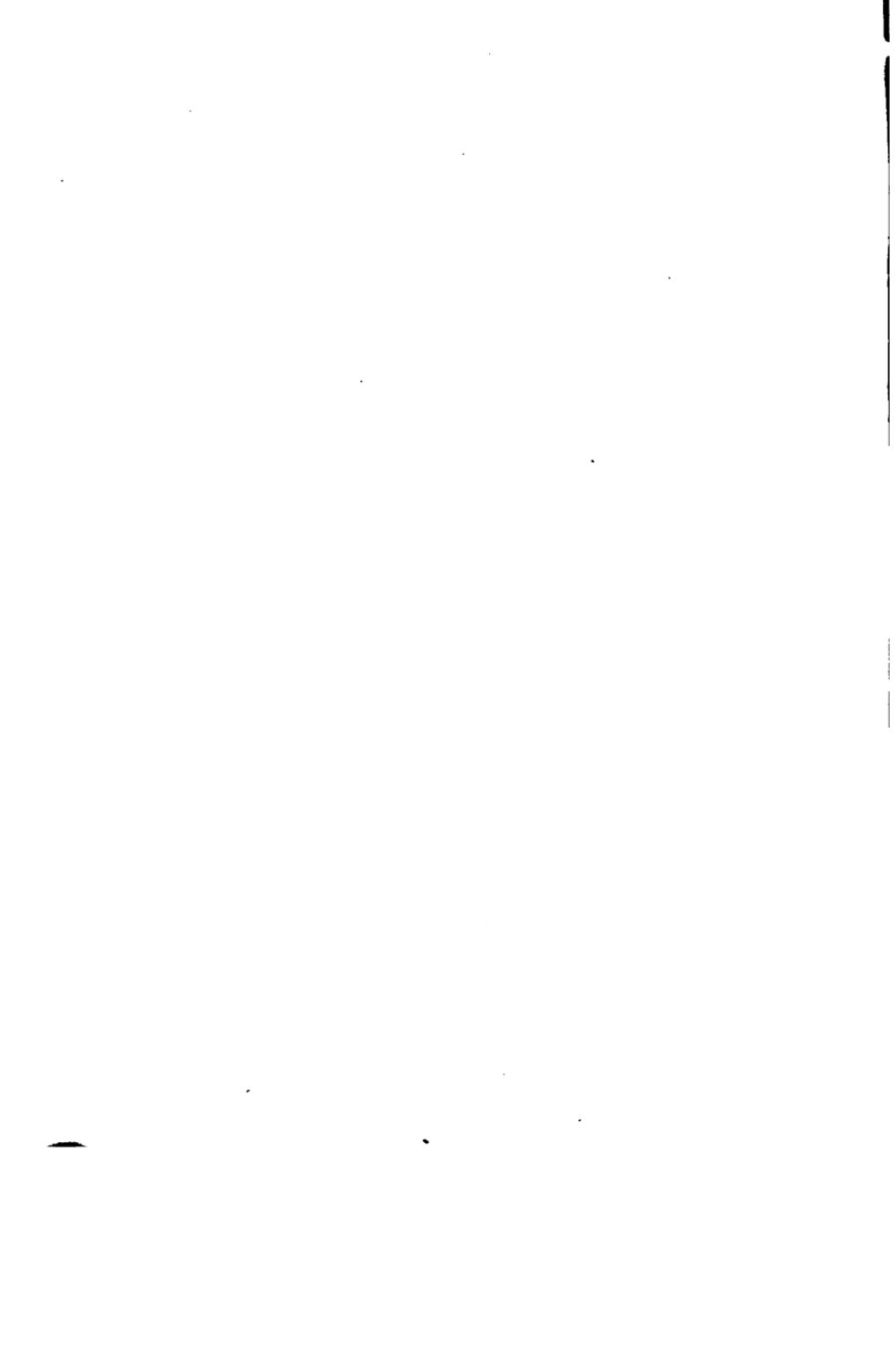
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## **THE OLD TESTAMENT AND THE CRITICS**



## INTRODUCTION.

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The object of the author in preparing this little volume and taking the liberty of intruding it upon the public, is not the establishment of the divine authority of the Old Testament. The awful claim of being a communication from God to our race, he believes should be acknowledged only upon evidence the most unimpeachable. Yet the author most fully accepts this claim. The evidence on which it rests seems to him so ample, so overwhelming and so limitless, the thought of adequately presenting it, were he able to do so, brings the feeling of weariness and discouragement. For more than thirty centuries the Old Testament, like some *sacred fountain*, has been issuing streams of healing, of hope and gladness, and every year the evidence of its divine origin has been accumulating.

The object of the author, so far as he is able, is rather to remove acknowledged difficulties from the Old Testament, by which honest inquirers are perplexed and stum-

bled. The author lays no claim to enlarged scholarship, and is painfully conscious of the imperfections of this little book, but having been a public teacher of the Sacred Oracles for forty years, he is too deeply grounded in the conviction that the thought it embodies carries the endorsement of the Divine Teacher to be easily moved by objections and criticisms.

The Old Testament was essentially what it is now, containing the same imperfections and difficulties it now contains, and Christ virtually cancelled them, when, with perhaps the Old Testament in his hand, he offered the prayer, "Sanctify them through *thy truth*; thy word is truth," meaning the Old Testament is God's word; it is truth—truth more eternal than the hills, and we believe by and by it is certain to dominate the convictions of the world.

#### THE AUTHOR.

597 Cleveland Ave.,  
Chicago.

*Petitio principii*  
**The Old Testament and the Critics. Thruout,**

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## CHAPTER I.

### THE DIFFICULTIES OF THE OLD TESTAMENT.

The Bible is now in its crucial period. It has probably never passed a severer ordeal. Attacks, especially upon the Old Testament were never more insidious, persistent, and never threatened more harm. They are not the attacks of ignorance; the time of scoffing has passed by; nor, in the main, are these attacks from open enemies. It is not from Voltaires, Tom Paines, Ingersolls, we have most to fear. Christianity has won too many conquests, and planted itself too deeply in the soil of this world, to be much affected by sneers and coarse invective. Science has taken the field; the attacks come largely from scholarship, from patient toil, the midnight lamp, and from professed friends. Its

foes are chiefly those of its own household. The men with whom we contend use polished weapons. "The pen is mightier than the sword." To eliminate the supernatural from the Old Testament, and, perhaps inadvertently, to remove the pillar on which the superstructure of Christianity rests, has been the chief end they have sought to accomplish. A Bible devoid of the supernatural, whose heroes and martyrs and great men are myths, and whose histories are legends, is not a revelation from God. It is a matter of sorrow to find in the category of so-called critics many highly honored names, such as Harper, Briggs, Mitchel, Abbott, Denney, Driver, Preserved Smith and Goldwin Smith. The reader will allow a few quotations to indicate the trend of their criticisms.

Professor Goldwin Smith utterly discards the inspiration of the Old Testament, and rules the supernatural out of it. In his article entitled *Christianity's Milestone* he says: "The time has surely come when they, (the Hebrew books), as a supernatural revela-

tion, should be frankly and reverently laid aside, and no longer be allowed to cloud the vision of free inquiry, or cast the shadow of primeval religion and law over our modern life. It is useless and paltering with truth to set up, like the writer in *Lex Mundi*, the figment of semi-inspiration, an inspiration which errs, which contradicts itself, which dictates manifest incredibilities, such as stopping the sun, Balaam's speaking ass, Elisha's avenging bears, the transformation of Nebuchadnezzar, is no inspiration at all."\*

It is not a matter of surprise that one who discards the supernatural should discard such alleged events and records. Denying the supernatural logically necessitates the denial of all alleged events involving the supernatural, including nearly all the Hebrew history up to the entrance of Israel into Palestine, and many events of a later date, events of surpassing interest and importance, such as the sublime account of creation, the establishment of the Sabbath, of the marriage relation, the entrance of sin

\* See North American Review Dec., 1896.

into this world, the flood, the patriarchal history, the captivity of Israel into Egypt and their wondrous deliverance, their marvellous sojourn in the desert, the shekinah, next to the advent of the Son of man, the most wondrous thing of history; the sublime and awful grandeur of the giving of the law, events transcending in interest and meaning almost any others the pen has ever recorded—types and heralds of the advent of the Son of God. It is *divine* history which is sought to be erased.

The Professor from whom I have quoted is in doubt as to the deity of the God whom the Hebrews worshiped. His language is, “Why should we cling any longer to that which, whatever it may have been to the men of a primeval tribe, is to us a low and narrow conception of the Deity? Why should we force ourselves to believe that the Being who fills eternity and immensity became the guest of a Hebrew sheik, entered into covenant with the sheiks to the exclusion of the rest of the human race?” “Judaism,” he assures us, “never reached

the elevation of some of the choice spirits of the heathen world, such as Seneca, Epicetus; nor ever gained the conception of the universality of law, as we find in Plato and Cicero."

It will astonish many to learn that the author of the article from which these extracts are taken, professedly accepts the New Testament as of divine authority, is a member of a Christian church, and is termed by Rev. Dr. J. C. Woodman, his reviewer, "a reverent religious scholar." *why?*

The following is from the pen of the pastor of one of our largest evangelical churches: "That God should tell a father (speaking of Abraham) to kill his own child, it is not possible to believe; that God should command the children of Israel to exterminate the Canaanites, destroying women and children, it is not possible to believe; that God inspired a persecuted Hebrew captive to execrate Babylon in the words, 'O daughter of Babylon that art to be destroyed, happy shall he be that rewardeth thee as thou hast served us; happy shall he be that

taketh and dasheth thy little ones against the stones!'"\* Says the same author, "The new theology has no hesitation in accepting some miracles and rejecting others; accepting, for example, the resurrection of Christ as a fact sufficiently authenticated, doubting the resurrection of saints at the death of Christ as insufficiently authenticated, and disbelieving the historical character of the Jonah legend as not authenticated at all."† "In fact, I believe that some of the events there recorded, and generally regarded as miraculous, did take place; that others there recorded as referred to did not take place; and concerning others there recorded I am by no means certain whether they took place as recorded, or not. I do not believe that the sun stood still and the moon stayed in the valley of Ajalon at Joshua's command; I am uncertain as to what interpretation is to be given to the wonderful stories in the Book of Daniel."

The scholarly Griggs, while accepting the *religious* lessons of the Old Testament as divine, finds much of it utterly incongruous

\* *Evolution of Christianity*, p. 57.

† *Same*, p. 214.

with the spirit and teachings of the New. He cannot believe God commanded Abraham to kill his child; or that he commended Jael for treacherously slaying Sisera. He does not "believe the spirit of revenge breathed in the command to exterminate the Canaanites, or that animated the imprecatory Psalms, or that threads itself into the story of Esther," is the spirit of Christ, or of the New Testament. He finds "occasional representations of vindictiveness on the part of God, jealousy of other gods, with cruel disregard of human suffering and life, vacillation of purpose and the passion of anger.\* These he cannot accept as inspired.

There are real difficulties, no one denies, connected with the Old Testament; things which seem, certainly to a superficial view, incongruous with the whole spirit of the New; and the question is on the lips of thousands of honest enquirers, Can we accept the Old Testament as a whole, without qualification, as of equal inspiration with the New? will modern criticism compel us to relegate it, or any part of it, to the cate-

\* See address before Parliament of Religions.

gory of the human, or even lower our confidence in its authority and sacredness? These questions, as will be seen in the sequel, involve not the Old Testament only, but the whole fabric of the Christian faith.

The difficulties over which our critics largely stumble are the alleged incredibilities of the book. It is no marvel the men who discard the supernatural find them. It is a book of wonders; it deals chiefly with the unseen and eternal. Its very atmosphere is the mysterious and supernatural; but the reader should not be stumbled by this. It is precisely what he should look for. Were it (the Old Testament) otherwise the evidence of its divine authority would be wanting. "If I do not the works," said the Great Teacher, "that no other man doeth, believe me not."

If God has made a revelation to the world and commissioned chosen men to communicate it to others, He certainly would have provided them some means of confirming the fact. "Jesus of Nazareth," says the apostle, "was approved of God unto you by

*mighty works, by signs and wonders which God did by him, in the midst of you.*" Otherwise he could not have been believed. Had the prophet on Mt. Carmel assured gathered Israel that Jehovah is God and Baal but an image, the assertion would probably have availed nothing; but when he prayed, "O Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and of Israel, let it be known this day that I am thy servant, and that I have done all these things at thy word; hear me, O Lord, hear me, that this people may know that thou Lord art God," instantly fire fell, and consumed the burnt offering, and the wood, and the stone, and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trenches; and when all the people saw it they fell on their faces, and they said, "The Lord, He is God, the Lord, He is God." That fire was God's indorsement of the prophet, his handwriting which no being could counterfeit. So these incredibilities are God's endorsement of the truths the sacred writers put on record. To the Christian they are divine interven-

tions; to our critics they are stumbling blocks.

The logic of the critics is not logical; it is plainly *petitio principii*. Their syllogism reads thus: (1) Any alleged event involving the supernatural is absurd and untruthful. (2) Such alleged events as the residence of Daniel in a lion's den, Jonah in a whale's belly, etc., do involve the supernatural. (3) Therefore they are absurd and untruthful. A better syllogism reads thus: All records endorsed by special *divine intervention* are inspired. All Old Testament records are thus endorsed, therefore all Old Testament records are divinely inspired.

The critic creates his own difficulties. He reads how Elijah was carried to heaven in a chariot of fire; how the Red Sea opened its waters, and a nation passed over on dry land. How a great people were fed for decades on manna falling every morning from heaven. The writers seem to be truthful, and their statements well supported and generally believed, and he is

perplexed. No wonder. He is like the man who has convinced himself there is no such thing as a sun, and is greatly perplexed at the facts which meet his eyes in the streets at noonday. There is a very simple way out of his dilemma. He has but to confess he has been mistaken ; that there is a sun in the great heavens, but he has been too blind to see it. Let the critics do likewise, and these wondrous narratives will appear not only credible but just what we should have expected.

But the critics answer us, that some of the narratives of the Old Testament are too evidently absurd to be believed. For example, that a deluge once covered the entire globe with water, so deep as to bury the high mountains, which would have required ten or a hundred times the water there is or ever was upon the earth. There is, we answer, nothing in the narrative inconsistent with the theory that only the inhabited, a very limited portion of the globe, was submerged. This would have accomplished the end in view ; and as God, as far as we can see, always ac-

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complishes His purpose by the simplest and least expensive means, this is the logical interpretation of the narrative. This end was effected by the falling rains and the breaking up the fountains of the great deep, or the subsidence of the land below the level of surrounding waters. The language, "under the whole heavens" we may regard as *ad sensum*, meaning under the whole sky, the only heavens of which anything was known. There certainly is no absurdity here.

We are also pointed to the assertion, that at the command of Joshua the sun stood still for the space of a day in the midst of the heavens, and we are assured that such an event would have carried disorder through the solar system, and made an epoch in the world's history; but we have never learned that even a sparrow's nest was disturbed. This event, which one of our critics insinuates involves falsehood enough to vitiate the whole Old Testament, is usually regarded as one of the simplest narratives, involving only an unusual but

doubtless miraculous condensation of the atmosphere, and so large a consequent refraction of the rays of the sun, as to have made it visible until perhaps late into the night. In this way God accomplishes two ends, (1) He confirms the divine commission of his servant Joshua; (2) He enabled the Hebrew armies to overwhelm their enemies before the darkness could conceal them. The language is, "And the sun stayed in the midst of the heaven, and hasted not to go down about a whole day," or, as Prof. Bush translates the language, "as in a whole (or perfect) day." The assertion is *ad sensum*, precisely like the assertions, "the sun rose," and "the sun set."

The sacred writer doubtless accepted the *Ptolemaic* theory of the universe, and by using language *ad sensum*, he avoids committing the narrative to a false theory. "We find," says a late writer, speaking of the Bible, "marvelous wisdom in reference to all matters of science, securing the use of popular expressions which are always ap-

propriate, and the avoidance of all technical terms which imply scientific theory. \*

It is admitted that a clear absurdity, or an alleged event which contradicts a rational intuition, is incredible, and that no proof can establish it. But an absurdity cannot, we claim, be found in the Old Testament. To one who accepts the book as a special revelation from God, its wonders are not incredible. The proof is, they have been credited by the millions of the best and wisest of our race, and denied only by those who discard the supernatural.

The Old Testament, no candid man will deny, makes for purity, righteousness and the general good, and when its language will bear such a construction, a different one is forbidden by every canon of interpretation. The book suffers so much from no other cause as from the gross violation of this universal law. I shall be allowed to refer to two such cases: (1) Deut., 14:21, "Ye shall not eat anything that *dieth* of itself; thou mayest give it unto the stranger

\* Fairchild's Elements of Theology, p. 13.

that is within thy gates, that he may eat it, or thou mayest sell it unto the foreigner, *for thou art a holy people unto the Lord.*" To interpret this into permission to sell unwholesome food to strangers is a cruel perversion of this language. The last clause shows, on the face of it, to be utterly inadmissible. Because "thou art a holy people unto the Lord" would be a remarkable reason for permission to cheat and poison the defenseless and the poor. The meaning is obvious, when we consider that their ceremonial law strictly forbade eating the flesh of an animal, every drop of whose blood had not been extracted in putting it to death; in other words, eating an animal that dieth *of itself*.

There is another consideration which makes this interpretation doubly inadmissible, the idea that a Jew was authorized, by law, to sell unwholesome food to the stranger and the poor, is absurd in view of the then stringent laws requiring most tender and sacred regard for the rights of this class. "Thou shalt not oppress the stranger" was

emblazoned on their statute books. Such a contradiction as this permission would make in their laws was not possible.

(2) Numbers, 13, is subjected to an interpretation still more gross and unpardonable. Moses, according to the account, sent forth the armies of Israel with instructions to utterly exterminate the Midianites, their cruel, corrupt and corrupting enemies. Israel returns from the conflict, bringing back large spoil, and the women they had taken captive. Moses was angry exceedingly at their disobedience, especially so as the women had been chiefly instrumental in seducing Israel into idolatry and its corrupting orgies. But he consents to spare the lives of the old and young, of whose innocence he was certain. Now in view of the regard of that people for chastity, and the stringent laws, even the death penalty protecting it, it is inferred that aged law giver publicly and by proclamation spared these female captives, the aged and the little ones, for lewd purposes, and allowed the fact to be committed to their nation's history. The

suggestion is simply *shameful*, and doubly so when we consider the character of the men who constituted that army. It was the last army Moses ever sent into the field.

The chapter in which this event is recorded commences thus: "And the Lord spake unto Moses saying, 'Avenge the children of Israel of the Midianites, and afterward thou shalt be gathered unto thy fathers.'" Israel was then on the borders of the promised land. With two exceptions, that whole people had been reared from infancy, not in Egyptian bondage, but in the intense religious atmosphere of the desert, overshadowed by the Shekinah, dwelling almost in the immediate presence of God. Another race of people, excelling them in purity of morals and lofty integrity, the world's history has probably failed to produce.

The question, whether the records of the Old Testament are historical or apochryphal, is not a matter for discussion. They are confirmed beyond rational dispute by contemporaneous history outside the Bible.

The plagues of Egypt, the wondrous exodus of Israel from Egyptian bondage, their passage over the Red Sea, the burial in its waters of the armies of Egypt, the giving of the law, the wonders of the desert, and the sacrifice on Mt. Carmel, occurred not in a corner, but in the presence of thousands and hundreds of thousands of eye witnesses. They occurred when the art of writing was generally understood, and when books and libraries abounded over Egypt, Syria, Chaldea and Palestine, and were early incorporated into, and became a part of the unchallenged history of the world, and are as well attested as the destruction of Jerusalem, or the decline and fall of the Roman Empire.

Is it possible that two million of men and women believed they crossed the Red Sea on dry ground, shielded from pursuing armies by a pillar of cloud and fire, all one awful night, had it not been true! would their children and children's children, down to the present hour, without, so far as is known, a dissenting voice! and would these records stand unchallenged to-day as a part

of their national history had they not been verities? It would savor of infatuation to believe it.

No other history has ever been regarded so sacred, or been guarded with such sleepless vigilance as the annals of the Hebrew people. Says Josephus, a Jew of great learning and influence, born seven years after the crucifixion: "How firmly we have given credit to these books of our nation (the Old Testament) is evident by what we do; for during so many ages as have already elapsed, no one has been so bold as either to add anything to them or take away anything from them. But it has become natural to all Jews immediately and from their birth, to esteem these books to contain divine doctrines, and to persist in them, and if occasion comes, be willing to die for them, for it is no new thing for our captives, many of them in numbers, and frequently in time, to be seen to endure racks and death of all kinds upon the theatres, that they may not be obliged to say one word against our laws, or the records that contain them. Whereas

there are none in all among the Greeks who would endure the least harm on that account, no, not in the case if all their writings, which are among them, were to be destroyed."

The knowledge of the Old Testament events was not limited to the Hebrew people. It was gathered up, committed to writing to a greater or less extent, and in part constituted the contents of books and libraries. The histories, or clear allusions to them, are found engraven on monuments and tombstones and buried rocks, where they have been sleeping in silence and forgetfulness for thousands of years. These are being exhumed by the spade of the archeologist, and are to a degree duplicating the Old Testament, and to a wonderful extent are corroborating the sacred records. That fourteenth chapter of Genesis, long the arsenal of the skeptic and critic, now gives the most unimpeachable testimony to the accuracy of the Old Testament historians. The Tell Amarna tablets, and almost every added discovery, is but a

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new witness to the veracity of the Old Testament. And "there's more to follow."

I am sure we shall soon hear from the skeptic the cry of the dying emperor, "O Galilean, thou hast conquered!" The spade is becoming conqueror, mightier than the pen or the sword.

## CHAPTER II.

### THE OLD TESTAMENT CORROBORATED BY THE NEW.

He who accepts the divine authority of the New Testament logically accepts that of the Old.

The two are inseparable, so interlinked and interwoven together, as to make them a unit. The avowal of belief in one, and disbelief in the other, is an absurdity, a self contradiction. The strongest support of the divine authority, and the historical accuracy of the Old Testament is found in the hundred times repeated indorsement of the New. "If ye had believed Moses," says the Master, "ye would have believed me"; and he might have added, If ye had believed me, ye would have believed Moses, "for he wrote of me."

At the time of Christ, the books of the Old Testament—all now recognized by Protestants as inspired, and no others were

bound in a single volume under the names "the Word," "the Law," "Scriptures," "The Law and the Prophets"—were in common use among the Jewish people, were read in their synagogues on the Sabbath, and venerated as no other book was ever venerated, as of divine authority, and as such it was as clearly indorsed by the Great Teacher of Galilee as it is possible to indorse a book. "Think not," he says "I came to destroy the Law and the Prophets. I came not to destroy, but to fulfill. For verily I say unto you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all things be accomplished; whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and teach men so, shall be called least in the Kingdom of heaven. But whosoever shall do and teach them shall be called great in the Kingdom of heaven."

No candid man will say here is not a clear and emphatic endorsement of the divine character of the Old Testament. Christ stakes the destiny of men upon breaking or keeping its precepts.

He teaches this truth in a manner transcendently solemn in the parable of the rich man and the beggar. He represents the former as in the regions of despair, and after having abandoned all hope for himself, lifting to heaven the cry "Father Abraham, send Lazarus to my father's house, for I have five brethren, that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment." But the answer comes back, "They have Moses and the Prophets, let them hear them."

But the lost man continues to plead, "Nay father Abraham, but if one go to them from the dead, they will repent." The crushing answer comes back, "If they hear not Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be persuaded if one rise from the dead," and the poor man is silent. The meaning of this is, the Old Testament is the most effective instrumentality God has provided for the salvation of man. If this fails the bell may toll; nothing else will avail, not even one coming back from the dead.

To the same effect is the Master's assertion, John 5:39: "Ye search the Scriptures because ye think that in them ye have eternal life, and these are they which *bear witness of me*, and ye will not come to me that *ye may have life*." This is the language of sadness and astonishment,—meaning, ye search the Old Testament and know what it contains, and yet refuse to come to me for life.

Similar testimony could be adduced to almost any extent. The New Testament is the complement of the Old. Each is incomplete without the other. The New Testament explains the Old, enforces its precepts, confirms its histories, and vouches over and over again for its divine authority. It refers with more or less detail to many of its miracles, and its great histories, such as the creation of man and woman, the apostacy, the deluge, the exodus of Israel from Egypt, the crossing of the Red Sea, the wonders of the desert, the ass speaking with man's voice, the sublime events of Mt. Carmel, and numerous others, yet casts no

shadow of doubt upon the validity of a single statement.

Even Prof. Smith is compelled to acknowledge that "Christ accepted the sacred books, and in addressing an audience which believed in them, cited them and appealed to their authority. He cited the book of Jonah, and in terms which seem to show he regarded it as real history. Few, even the most orthodox, would now profess to believe that Jonah sojourned in the belly of a fish. St. Paul in like manner treats the narrative of the fall of Adam as historical, and connects a doctrine with it, though the mythical character of the narrative is admitted by a dignitary of the church. And the evangelists find in the sacred books of their nation prognostications of the character and mission of Jesus." And we are amazed he should add, "no specific prediction of the advent of Jesus, or any event of his life, can be produced from the books of the Old Testament."

*why?*

— So interlinked are the Old and New Testament, the former is regarded by the Chris-

tian world as Messianic. It seems to have been the great object of the former to acquaint the world with Christ and the nature of his mission; to prepare the world for his advent and furnish proof of his Messiahship. So the Master himself teaches. "All things," he says, "must be fulfilled which are written in the law and in the prophets concerning me." "Search the Scriptures, for these are they which bear witness of me." "If ye had believed Moses ye would believe me, for he wrote of me." "Beginning," says the evangelist, "with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself." Christ represents himself as being the great theme of the Old Testament Scriptures.

Can there be clearer testimony to the inspiration of the Old Testament than Acts 4:25: "The Holy Ghost *by the mouth of our father, David*, didst say, 'Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing.'" Hebrews 1:1: "God having spoken unto the fathers in the Prophets in divers portions and in divers manners, hath

at the end of these days spoken unto us in his Son." "*Thus saith the Lord*" is a formula with the Prophets. We have the expression, "The Lord spake unto Moses," more than an hundred times in the Pentateuch. "The prophecy came not in old times," says the apostle, "by the will of man, but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." How it is possible to accept the divine authority of the New Testament, and reject that of the Old, certainly needs explanation.

There are difficulties in the Old Testament, and there are difficulties *out* of the Old Testament. In the natural world there are wonders, unanswered questions, inexplicable things. We are environed on every side by mysteries; the best way out of them is not the denial of the divine existence, for it only deepens the mysteries around us. Nor is the denial of the supernatural the best way out of Old Testament difficulties. It only increases the darkness and complicates the riddle. "I would give all I possess in the world, and all this world beside, were

it mine," said an aged atheist, "could I believe there is a God, for the rest it would bring."

That awful thinking intelligence within, whose thoughts "wander through eternity," needed rest. He felt himself on a dark and shoreless sea, lost—darkness above, darkness beneath, darkness and mystery everywhere. There is but one resting place in this universe, that is in God; here, and nowhere else is rest unto the intellect and unto the soul. Eliminating supernaturalism from the Old Testament is eliminating it from the New, and virtually leaves a man "without God in the world."

A somewhat popular theory, "The Old Testament contains the word of God, rather than *is* the word of God," removes no difficulty. The objection fatal to this theory is, we have no canon determining what portions are the word of God and what portions are not the word of God, and consequently it is not possible with any degree of certainty to predict divine authority of any particular chapter or verse, and practically

the theory voids the whole Bible of the divine element. The word of God may be in the Old Testament, but if we have no means of knowing where, it is of no practical value. This theory is applicable to the New Testament as well as the Old, and virtually robs us of the revelation God has given.

Prof. Briggs, who adopted this theory, draws the line between the *secular* and *religious* lessons of the Bible. But such a line, were it possible to draw it, affords us no relief, since it is the religious lessons to which its difficulties mainly, if not wholly pertain.

It seems to me we should hesitate long before adopting this mode of removing the difficulties of the Old Testament, as it allows anyone to deny the divine authority of any promise, or precept, or declaration he may choose, and instead of removing the difficulties of the Old Testament, it removes the Old Testament and also the New.

## CHAPTER III.

### OLD TESTAMENT INSPIRATION.

Inspiration, either of the Old Testament or of the New Testament, involves two elements, (1) the inbreathing by the Holy Spirit thoughts into the minds of chosen men, by means of visions, dreams, words, or by any other means. (2) Such superintendence and aid of the Holy Spirit as was requisite to secure a fair and adequate embodiment of these truths in writing.

In reference to the first element, there can, it would seem, be no doubt as to the inerrance of the thought communicated. It is hardly thinkable the Holy Spirit would communicate untruth or error; we may, I think, lay it down as axiomatic that an inspired thought is an inerrant thought.

In reference to the second element, the question has long been before the Christian world, as to the extent of aid the inspired

received from the Inspirer. Just here probably lies the difference, if there be any, between Old and New Testament inspiration.

A correct theory of inspiration is of prime importance in this discussion, especially in dealing with the alleged difficulties of both the Old and the New Testaments. Defective theories are the source of a large share of them. The Bible has suffered much from this source, especially from what is termed *plenary* inspiration in its various phases. It has proved, I think, "one of the Bible's millstones." The idea that the Bible is, or was as it came from the hands of its original writers, absolutely inerrant or that the sacred penmen were little other than amanuenses copying the language dictated by the Holy Spirit, assuming any error is incombatable with inspiration, puts a very effective weapon into the hands of the skeptic. (1) This theory cannot be proved. (2) It would add nothing to the authority or value of inspiration if it could. (3) It is assuming an unnecessary burden, one we are unable to carry, and laying ourselves

open to criticism and defeat. (4) The theory is both unscriptural and untrue. The writer of the Hebrews sets it aside by a single word, 1:1: "God having of old time spoken unto the fathers in the Psalms and in the Prophets in divers portions and in *divers manners*, hath in those last days spoken unto us in his Son." It will occur to the reader of the Old Testament that God largely employed, not words alone, but *visions* and *dreams* as modes of communicating truth.

The theory of inspiration most satisfactory to my mind, is the one suggested by the author of Rational Theology.\* The author distinguishes broadly between a *truth* or *thought* and the language in which it is clothed, a distinction which we think everyone recognizes. Everyone admits he has ideas he is unable to embody in language. The theory holds that the former, the *thought*, contained in the Holy Scriptures is divine and inerrantly inspired. The latter, the language, is so far inspired as to make it a fair exponent of the divine thought,

\*Pp. 286, 287, vol. II.

leaving the writer to his own discretion in the choice of language. Thus introducing two elements into the holy Scriptures, a *human* and a *divine*, one inerrant, the other subject to the infirmities and imperfections of all that is human.

In the words of another, he defines inspiration as "that guidance from above, whereby the sacred penmen were preserved from all errors which would interfere with the ends the Holy Spirit had in view, in giving a revelation to man." In a word, the Holy Spirit saw fit to correct only such errors as would impair the meaning or value of the truth he sought to communicate, and to protect it only from such defects as would pervert or obscure its meaning. As the result of this human element, the author believes the Bible more valuable, inasmuch as it is better adapted to human weakness, just as was the Son of man in "being made like unto his brethren."

This theory of inspiration, as will be seen, tides us over the bad grammar, the defective logic, the feeble metaphor, and indeed

the major part of the difficulties of which the critics complain. These are not the defects of inspiration, but of the ignorance and carelessness of the sacred writers.

When on meeting an inaccuracy in the Bible, or a discrepancy between its writers, the question is not, Is it an error? but is it an error which affects the lesson the Holy Spirit intended to impart? If it does not, inspiration is in no sense responsible for it. It lies outside the sphere of inspiration. The Holy Spirit did not purpose to correct all the errors of the sacred writers. Its work was accomplished in securing an adequate expression of the thought He purposed to convey. The discrepancy between the evangelists Matthew and John, as to the color of the robe worn by Christ at his trial, or between Matthew and Luke as to how many blind men were restored to sight near Jericho, or as to the exact spot where the miracle occurred, were no more defects of inspiration than would have been inaccuracies in orthography. This simple theory of

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inspiration removes the larger share of the Old Testament difficulties.

In what consists the difference between the inspiration of the Old and the New Testaments? Did it consist in the larger amount of divine aid imparted to the New Testament writers? or in their superior culture, or superior ability to express inspired truth in a clear and more incisive language? I see no evidence of this. The writers of the Old Testament were not inferior men. It is questionable whether history mentions a greater name than Moses. Samuel was a remarkable man, a man of overshadowing influence. During his active life he held the reins of authority over a great people. The reigning monarch was a child in his presence. He was above the throne. The names of Isaiah and David will be honored and wept over while human hearts pulsate. And the writer of the book of Job ranks among the greatest poets of the world. The writers of the New Testament were better instructed in the things of God. They had basked in the rays of the Sun of righteous-

ness, as the writers of the Old had not. Of the two, if we may compare infinities, the New is the richer and the more valuable, as it contains the earthly history and teaching of the Son of man. But both are products of the same author. They speak in the same language and by the same authority, and breathe the same spirit. I see no difference as to the degree and extent of their inspiration.

But it is objected that considerable portions of the Old Testament could not have been inspired, because quoted from other writers. That there are quotations in the Old Testament, as in the other books, no one doubts. The earlier records of Genesis might have been extracts from monuments antedating the life of Moses more than a thousand years. The beautiful epic of the prophetess Hannah, the song of the Hebrews lifted on the banks of the Red Sea, over the graves of Egypt's armies, were quotations; and probably the whole book of Job was written by some Homer of earlier times. But if incorporated into the sacred

canon under divine direction, and endorsed by the Great Teacher, the evidence of their divine inspiration is not in the least impaired.

It is not claimed these quotations were in every respect inerrant. But I think we may with certainty claim they contain no deadly thing, and no word or thought has been incorporated into the sacred canon which interferes with the end the Inspirer had in view in giving a revelation to men.

It is asked whether inspiration includes events which were perfectly familiar to the sacred writer, and of general notoriety. I answer, it is not credible any event has crept into the sacred volume unauthorized by the sacred Author.

## CHAPTER IV.

### ALLEGORICAL INTERPRETATION.

The use of language is to convey thought, and the paramount question of the reader should always be, What is the exact thought the writer intended to convey? The presumption always is, it is to be found in the *plain, obvious* import of his language, and so his language should be interpreted unless there are adequate reasons for interpreting it otherwise. By an unvarying canon of interpretation the burden of proof lies on the side of an allegorical or figurative meaning.

In the New Testament we read, "Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod," and "he was baptized of John in Jordan," and no one ever put a construction upon the words other than their plain literal import. In the Old Testament we read the equally plain assertion, "In the beginning

God created the heavens and the earth;" and, "He formed man out of the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and he became a living soul," and the Christian public is desirous of knowing why the one quotation is accepted in its obvious meaning, and an interpretation is given the other as diverse from its *obvious meaning* as would be the history of France. Can any reason for this be suggested? The scenes of the creation were probably presented to the eyes of the seer like a panorama, and we have the right to assume he committed to writing as accurate a description as his limited language would allow; and we find the character and order of events certainly not inconsistent with the best and latest results of scientific research. If there are good reasons for making one of the quotations literal and the other allegorical, it certainly is not obvious.

This world exists and somehow came into being, and so did man and beast. Can anyone suggest a genesis more natural, credible, or one less offensive to our fastid-

ious critics, than the one given by Moses? Our critics are ready with an answer. They assure us that the law of *evolution* presents a theory of creation more simple, natural, probable, and vastly less objectionable, the *scientific theory*, the one all scientific men are accepting.

Says Dr. Lyman Abbott, "All scientific men to-day are evolutionists, that is, they agree substantially that all life proceeds by regular and orderly sequence, from the simple to the complex, from lower to higher forms, in accordance with laws, which either are now or may be understood." "Evolution," says Le Compt, "is progression, according to certain laws, and by means of resident forces." The only phase of this theory pertaining to our subject, is its relation to the genesis of man. It holds that man sprang ages ago from protoplasm, or the earliest germ of animal life, and by some resident force, either inherent potency of matter or divine energy, has been developed through all the grades of animal

existence to his present altitude in accordance with fixed laws.

"Man," says Dr. Abbott, "is an animal, about this there can be no doubt; a vertebrate animal, belonging to the class mammel, and by most scientists classed in the family of apes, and has ascended from a lower animal. There is absolutely no question that every individual of the race has passed through animal stages in reaching manhood. I embrace the conclusions of the embryologists, we are animals, we ascended from lower animals." President Jordan, of the Leland Stanford University, is even more explicit. "Homologies," he says, "more perfect than those connecting man with the great group of monkeys could not exist. These embrace the hosts of apes and monkeys; as to this there can be no doubt, and as similar relations with all members of the group mammals, blood relations must exist. It is perfectly true that with the higher anthropoid apes, the relations are extremely intimate." \*

\* *The Arena*, August, 1897.

Is this the allegorical interpretation and real thought the sacred writer intended to convey in Gen. 1:26-27: "And God said let us make man in our image after our likeness." "And God created man in his own image, in the image of God, created he him. Male and female created he them." Gen. 2:6.: "And the Lord formed man out of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul." Is there anything in the evolution theory that suggests the Mosaic genesis of woman or is even consistent with it? No, the Mosaic language is just as legitimately allegorized into the history of the war of the Revolution as into the evolution theory. Still Dr. Abbott has attempted it. "In a sense," he says, "it is true scientifically, that God has made man out of the dust of the earth—that is, out of lower forms, reaching back through various formations to the inorganic, dating man's genesis back of vegetable life to the inorganic." Prof. Guyot's "Scheme of Reconciliation" is much preferable, for the reason

no one ever understood it, and no one has the right to call it absurd. There are very many, and as it seems to us, insuperable objections to the theory of evolution, especially as it relates to the genesis of man.

(1) It is utterly unrelated to, and apparently incongruous with, the theory recorded in the sacred Scriptures and clearly indorsed by the Great Teacher.

(2) It seems to contain no practical lesson, no valuable or important thought, even if true. It affords no relief to the skeptic. It does not remove the supernatural from the Bible, the existence of a personal God from the universe, or the awful sense of obligation from the human soul. It required the same infinite intelligence and recourses to breathe that mysterious thing we call life into protoplasm six hundred thousand years ago, it did to breathe it six thousand years ago into a perfected human form. There is necessarily no atheism in it to commend it to the atheist.

(3) The unanswerable objection to its theory of the genesis of man, is of a nega-

tive character. There is not the slightest evidence, so far as I am able to discover, of its truth. It is hardly thinkable, if this progression of life upward by established law, has been going forward through uncounted centuries, and not the slightest evidence of it, on the surface of the ground, or in the rock beneath us, though searched for as for hidden treasure, has ever been found. ? ? Though if this theory be true, nine-tenths if not ninety-nine one-hundredths of animal life must have been spent in this transitional state, between lower and higher species of animals, yet nothing of the kind, dead or living has ever been seen. ? This fact simply cancels the evolution theory, so far as it pertains to the genesis of man.

Can there be a clearer antithesis than that between this theory and the declaration Gen. 1:25 "And God made the beasts of the field after his kind, and the cattle after their kind, and everything that creepeth on the ground after its kind," making each species of animal *sui generis*, so far as is known, and so to all appearance it has

remained. It is well said that no one species of animal has ever been transmuted into another. The dog has made no approach to man, since he was in the garden of Eden; and there is no shadow of evidence he has undergone any change since the hour he first took his place on the theatre of this world. ? Nor so far as appears, has there been any essential change in man. ? He was just as noble and perfect the hour God "breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and he became a living soul," as now; and,

"When mid the wonder and surprise  
Of circling angels, woman's eyes  
First opened upon heaven and earth,  
And from their lids a beam was sent  
That through each living spirit went  
Like first thought, through the firmanent,"

she was just as loving, and beautiful and loved as now.

(4) If this resident force, of which we hear so much, is the eternal energy from which all things proceed, and as Dr. Abbott assures us, is "a constant force, never in-

creased or diminished, and never admits of intervention," the *unequal* progress upward of animal life needs explanation. How is it that of a family of tadpoles, for example, all equal a thousand centuries ago, but to-day one branch has evolved into human beings, while another remains unchanged. One, to-day has his seat in the United States Senate, another keeps his place in the village mill-pond. How is it that the lower animals, which, as science shows, have been on this globe ages longer than man, have been so strangely outstripped. All the lower animals would, were this science true, have been developed into men centuries ago, and men would have been the only living beings on our planet. There certainly are some things about evolution hard to be understood.

(5) It is unfortunate that the advocates of evolution are not sufficiently agreed among themselves to formulate a clear, intelligible definition of their science. It would be greatly to their advantage to know definitely what they are talking about.

Charles R. Darwin, the reputed father of the science, never accepted the doctrine of *resident force*, which constitutes the essential element of the system. He believed in the progression of animals upward, but attributed it to the "struggle for life" and the "survival of the fittest."

Very few certainly agree with Dr. Abbott that man was once a vegetable, or deny there are *second causes*, which involves a denial of human free agency, of accountability, and the possibility of guilt, and certainly few believe sin is an inheritance bequeathed the human race from the lower animals, which never had any sin.

Nor do many evolutionists agree with President Jordan, who includes in this "enormous science" not only "all natural history, not only processes like cell divisions and nutrition; not only the laws of variation, natural selection and mutual help, but all matters of human history and the most complicated relations of civics, economics, and ethics." We are glad to know there is one department of human knowledge the

President does not include in the "greatest of all sciences," that is *religion*. His language is: "There are many definitions of religion, but evolution does not fit any of them." The definition of Prof. McKenzie, who makes the terms evolution and continuity synonyms, is a good one, as it can be made to mean anything we choose; but I think most educated men would prefer *verba, praeterea nihil*.

Dr. Behrends asserts "the word evolution has *never yet* been defined. Everyone uses it, yet no one seems able to give it a definition which is clear and final. No magician's wand ever played so many fantastic tricks as can this word; it can be theistic or atheistic. It can at one time bow God out of the universe; at another make him imminent and personal in every action."

Many calling themselves evolutionists I profoundly respect as scholars and Christians, many of whom have given the subject of evolution years of thought, and seem deeply impressed with its vastness and value. I am far from claiming to be au-

thority on the science, and were I not under the impression that multitudes, probably the vast majority of educated men, think substantially as I do, it would be with hesitancy and self-distrust I should acknowledge, as I now do, that I have no recollection of ever having seen an argument for the evolution theory, so far as it relates to the genesis of man, which carried to my mind the shadow of plausibility.

The argument which I have met most frequently is the embryonic resemblance, growth, changes, etc., of all animals. Does this prove that all animals, including man, originated in the same stock ? The roots of the apple tree and the oak, in their earlier growth, probably so closely resemble each other as to be indistinguishable ; does that prove their genesis was the same germ ? Is there force enough in this consideration to set aside the divine declaration of making everything "after its kind" ? But the maturity and fruit of the apple and oak proves the roots of these trees are *not* alike, though

the difference is imperceptible even to the microscope ; and we may be pretty sure embryos of different *animals* are not alike. The argument is a manifest *non sequitur*.

In proof of evolution, we are referred to the testimony of primitive rocks. Says a late writer : "The lowest races of men existing at the present time fairly represent men as they must have been tens and hundreds of thousands of years ago, like the aborigines of Australia, or the Bushmen of Africa, prowling about, living very much as the animals they hunt, and with which they compete for food, sheltering in dens and holes, their social relations not much above those of prairie dogs and horses, with the scantiest language, with little or no intellectual life, with ideas of right and wrong, truth and error, which can scarcely be identified as such. In short, what these men are now, such, and even lower, were primeval men, such too have they continued to be for thousands and hundreds of thousand years."

This does not strike us as satisfactory

proof of a universal law of evolution. If primitive man were little, if any, above the brute, and so remained for thousands and hundreds of thousands of years, it is not perfectly evident where the proof comes in, "That all life proceeds by regular and orderly sequence from lower to higher forms, from the simple to the complex, by means of resident force." That there might have been such men in the early ages, no one doubts, but we learn from archeological explorers, that in the early times, while some tribes were very uncivilized, other tribes were very civilized; while some lived in caves, others lived in palaces. We have no more authority for calling the age in which some tribes cut their hair and carved their food with sharpened stones, the "*Stone age*," than we have to call the present age in which the Fiji Islanders eat men, the *cannibal age*.

*"off-side."* It is not scholarly to decry the past. There has been, admittedly, a great amount of ignorance and brutality on the planet,

and there has been a large amount of intellectual and moral greatness. Every age has had its great men, its poets, its prophets and seers, its heroes and statesmen, its Plato, whose birth antedates the Christian era more than four hundred years, whose name to-day is as familiar to scholars as household words, its Homer, born a thousand years before Christ, its Abraham, whose birth dates back almost to the flood, but whose name is to-day on the lips of an hundred million men and women. These are among the greatest names history records. We can trace back many a century, an almost world-wide tradition of a *golden age* that was. It is a remarkable fact that probably no tradition has planted itself more deeply in human memory. Dillman describes it as "a belief spread through all antiquity." Ex-Pres. Bartlett in his *Veracity of the Hexeteuch*, calls it "the *consensus of antiquity*." There is no greater mistake than that the world was first peopled by savages, or that man in his in-

fancy was a wild beast. The art of writing, books and schools probably antedated the flood.

Whatever else may be true of the science of evolution, if we may call it a science, its theory of the genesis of man *is not true*. To my mind it is not conceivable that a natural law called evolution, without some outward and higher intervention, has lifted the lower animals over the immeasurable gulf which lies between brutality, on the one side, and intelligence, accountability and immortality on the other. I would, in the language of the scholarly Agassiz, say: "Of the two, I prefer the theory that the primitive man was a fallen angel, to the theory he was an improved monkey."

A natural law is uniform, unintermittant, and universal in its action. The alleged law of evolution is *neither*. There is in this universe no universal progression from the simple to the complex, from the lower to the higher.

The great rhythm of things moves in two

directions. There is growth, and there is decay; there is progress and there is retrogression, and the two pretty nearly balance each other. I believe the world is growing better, but it is the result of *herculean effort*, not of natural law. Men and nations let alone, like the clock, run down.

"The earliest literature of a nation," says a recent writer, "is not always its poorest, nor its latest its best. Socrates and Plato and Aristotle are still unrivaled. We are not more skillful builders than the men who reared the Pyramids. We have not surpassed the old masters in painting, sculpture and music. In the realm of science evolution is an unproved theory. In the realm of literature it is *demonstrably false*."

why?

"Growth, development, evolution," says Dr. Abbott, "are synonyms." If to a pile of sand additions are daily made, and none removed, it will grow, but if additions cease to be made, it will cease to grow. Can this growth properly be said to be made by *resident forces*? If contributions be made from

*Fails to see his own point.*

water, the atmosphere, and from the soil to a tree, it will grow to maturity; if wholesome food be fed a child it will thrive, but if its natural nutriment be withheld from either, it will die. Resident forces cannot keep either a child or tree alive an hour. Can it properly be said that their growth is evolution, or effected by resident forces? Can any material thing increase without additions from without? God built the solar system, perhaps from preëxisting material, as the carpenter builds our residences from preëxisting material; can we attribute the existence of either to evolution or resident forces. Adam knew all this when in the garden of Eden. Has evolution added anything new? I confess I see no need of this new science, called by one of its advocates "the grandest generalization of this or any other age."

Serious objections other than those of a negative character are charged against the evolution theory. It is believed by many that in at least some of its aspects, to be in-

imicable to the great doctrines of the Christian religion. But this hardly seems possible of a system that numbers among its adherents such men as McCosh and the lamented Drummond, yet all are obliged to confess, it seems to have played havoc with the faith of some who were once pillars in the temple Christ is erecting.

## CHAPTER V.

### ALLEGORICAL INTERPRETATION.

The alleged histories of the Old Testament, such as the Mosaic cosmogony, the story of the creation of man and woman, of the garden of Eden, and the trees in its midst, the temptation and fall, the flood, the confusion of tongues, etc., the great Teacher accepted, and so did all his inspired followers, as historical; and so has the church through all these intervening centuries treated them as it has other reliable history, accepting that which is allegorical as allegorical, and that which is *not* plainly allegorical it has accepted in its simple obvious meaning, assuming the truth of God is expressed in language common people can understand. Nor has the church ever been stumbled by its great histories and miracles, knowing well that a divine communication must be attested by divine interpositions.

The presumption is, God, in addressing our race in its early infancy, certainly if just emerging from the weakness and ignorance of the lower animals, would not have employed riddles, or concealed his meaning under types and figures which only the astute and learned can decipher. It would seem at least to us, the simplest statement, such as we address to the child, would be more appropriate.

The obvious meaning of the sacred record —any other is forced, unnatural, and in the circumstances inadmissible—is that Adam and Eve were a new creation, and that their advent into this world introduced a new order of things. It was the world's great epoch. Its sovereigns had come to their possessions with the scepter in their hands. Henceforth the beasts of the field, the birds of the air, and the fish of the sea had a master.

In the work of creation, when all else was finished, there seemed a pause, and a voice was heard, "Let us make man in our own image, after our likeness." "And God cre-

Why,atural?

ated man in his own image, in the image of God, created he him, male and female created he them." If this language is inspiration, I cannot but believe it sets aside evolution, and teaches that man was an order of creation infinitely distinguished from anything previously made. This is the view which has dominated and will dominate<sup>2</sup> the convictions of the world.

But we are told many of the narratives of the Old Testament are so improbable it becomes necessary in an age like this to resort to *allegory*, if we expect anyone to believe them. The motive in saying this may be all right, but we doubt the assertion. We entertain the impression that these narratives render the Old Testament not only attractive, especially to the young, but that they are replete with valuable instruction.

For example, the genesis of woman involves a lesson of immeasurable importance, as the context suggests. It is an object lesson setting forth the unity of the family, the oneness of man and wife, and the tender, interesting and endearing relations

they sustain to each other. "A man shall leave father and mother and cleave unto his wife," and the relation shall be so close as practically to cancel their individuality and make the two a unit—so united that separate interests and discord would be excluded. God thus kindly impressed upon our race in its infancy, truth, which, had it been practically accepted, what an ocean of tears it would have saved! Who would cancel the great lesson?

For the alleged events of the garden, I see no occasion for resorting to allegory. It is certainly credible God commenced early to educate mural beings into subordination to authority and law. I can conceive of no means more simple and feasible than the prohibition to eat of one of the trees of the garden.

But the tempter was there; of course he was there, and probably just where God could make the best use of him in perfecting his plans of mercy; not the men reared where there are no temptations, dangers or battles are the kind God needs. The way to insure

the safety of our ships is not to attempt to banish all storms from the deep, but it is to build them so strong they can outride the wildest tempests that sweeps over the waters.

In the garden God began rearing men who can be trusted anywhere or in any work. This may be in part the object of this earthly life. God commits the use of one talent to man to make it safe to intrust him with ten talents by and by.

It is not certain the animal employed by the tempter to deceive the woman was the serpent *before* it was doomed to crawl on the ground and eat dust. It might have been the parrot or the gazelle.

This is not the only instance on record in which the tempter has spoken through other lips than his own. The apostle plainly sanctions this narrative as historical. "I fear," is his language, "lest by any means as the serpent beguiled Eve through his craftiness, your mind should be corrupted from the simplicity and purity that is toward Christ." Another monument was lifted bearing wit-

ness to-day, and will to the end of time to the historic accuracy of this narrative. I refer to the curse denounced against the serpent. "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed. It shall bruise thy head and thou shalt bruise his heel." This curse struck its roots deep into the human race and lingers there still unrelieved and unabated. There is no other animal on the earth, or in the sea from which men shudder and shrink, as from the serpent kind. The name almost creates a shudder.

There were two trees in the garden with names, one called the "Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil," the other the "Tree of Life." There is no evidence they differed essentially from each other or from other trees in the garden. We may suppose connected with the latter there was a promise, either imaginary or actual, that man should not die so long as he ate of its fruit. After the pair had been expelled from the garden, we are told God placed the "flame of a sword" which turned every way to keep

the way of the tree of life, lest man should put forth his hand and take of the Tree of Life" "and live forever;" in other words, should claim the promise they believed God had made, of exemption from death so long as they partook of its fruit—a promise which perhaps they knew God would have honored so long as its conditions were fulfilled.

I am far from saying this is the correct interpretation of this somewhat difficult expression "shalt live forever." It should be considered that probably we have given in this narrative the barest outline of the facts, and that the fuller statement might remove or modify the seeming difficulty. It should also be borne in mind, that inspiration is responsible only for the integrity of the thought, and a presentation of it, which would do it no injustice or violence; also that tropes and figures may be woven into literal narrative.

Do you credit, it is asked, the story of Jonah? I am compelled to do so, not because refusing involves a denial of the inspiration, or the divine authority of the book—

this I do not believe—but because the reasons for denying its historical character would apply with equal force to any other narrative or book in the sacred canon. (2) Because it has the undisputed air of truthfulness. It mentions the names of three then existing cities, and tells a wondrous tale about the great city of Ninevah, which would be criminal were it not true. (3) The whole history is self-consistent. It is wonderful that the preaching of a lone stranger should have shaken, from center to circumference, one of the greatest capitols of the world, as though earthquakes were beneath it. All this is explained and made credible by the probable fact that the marvellous experience of this stranger in the belly of a great fish, had become a matter of public notoriety, and king and people believed he was a prophet of God. (4) But the reason above all others for crediting the book, is the plain endorsement by Christ. The man who denies that “Jonah was three days and three nights in the whale’s belly,” and “The men of Nine-

vah repented at the preaching of Jonah," has a difficult problem to solve.

While allegorical interpretation of the Mosaic records may not clash with the doctrine of inspiration, the question is apposite. What is gained by such an interpretation? The presumption is against it, and so are the teachings of Christ and his apostles. It requires strong reasons to justify it.

If these alleged events are symbols, what do they symbolize? What truths are couched beneath Abel's murder, beneath the history of the flood, or the sublime and awful utterances and pageantry of Sinai? Can any allegory ever conceived of deepen their impressiveness? Can any theory surpass the grandeur and value of the simple events themselves? No, I answer, or even approach them. From these solemn and grand events to any allegorical interpretations is an infinite descent.

The events of Hebrew history from Abraham to the entrance of his posterity into Palestine are so interlinked as to be little

other than a continuous narrative. If the name Adam stands, as the critics claim, not for an individual but for the *human race*, Cain and Able are myths, and the sacrifices of one, the sad history of the other, and the city he built are all myths. Making the name of Adam stand for the race, makes havoc of some events of his life. For example, it makes Genesis 5:3 read thus: "And the human race lived thirty years, and begat a son and called his name Seth, and the days of the human race after he begat Seth were eight hundred years, and he begat sons and daughters, and all the days of the human race were eight hundred and thirty years and he died."

If Abraham was a myth we must erase the oppression of his descendants in Egypt, and our critics must forego the pleasure of denouncing the extermination of the Canaanites. It seems to me logically necessary to make the account wholly allegorical or wholly historical; a part history and a part myth makes patchwork.

*Eponymous ancestor.*  
*Distortion & Bunk.*

We repeat the question—what is gained by such interpretation? Nothing, I answer; on the contrary it involves an amazing loss, a loss in the field of literature the world can poorly afford. It virtually erases the oldest and some of the most valuable history ever committed to writing—history of untold value, because confirmed by the divine endorsement. It virtually blots out history which antedates the oldest records of the *quit yer  
hiddin'* rocks beneath us, and reaches back to the creation; histories which give us the name, and, in part, the life of the first man who ever trod this globe; some of the first words ever spoken, some of the first deeds ever performed, and blots them out irretrievably. And what is gained by it? Nothing! It is only dropping the substance, seizing the shadow, and loosing both. Could any robbery be more colossal?

Still more disastrous is its effect in the realm of religion. An allegorical interpretation, unless the obvious meaning of the writer, or demanded by the context, is not

*inspiration*, it is mere human opinion, substituted for the word of God. It may be truth, but it is not the truth the Holy Spirit intended to convey, and carries no divine authority and is of no more value than other writing.

We deprecate the liberty taken by many of the critics with the Bible. Its tendency is to destroy all sense of its sacredness, and to undermine all confidence in its divine authority. Teach a child the Bible does not mean what it says, assure him man was not made of the dust of the ground, that God did not breathe into his nostrils the breath of life, but that man was made out of lower animals; that the story of Joseph and of Jonah, which interested him so much, are stories written to convey some important truth concealed beneath the language, and you destroy his confidence in the Bible. No judicious Christian parent would allow such instruction imparted to his child. This interpretation is but a repetition of the old slander, "The Bible is an instrument on

which any tune can be played," and no slander has proved more pernicious in its influence. The Christian world insist the word of God shall be treated with at least the respect and deference due ordinary history, and that its awful verities shall not be trifled with.

## CHAPTER VI.

### ARE THE TWO TESTAMENTS IDENTICAL IN SPIRIT?

The objection to the Old Testament having the most weight, and presenting most difficulty is probably its alleged incongruity with the New. While it is admitted its trend, on the whole, makes for righteousness, it is claimed large portions of it inculcate the spirit of revenge, war, bloodshed, hatred to enemies, and cruel disregard for human suffering and life, contrasting with the spirit of Christ and the love which is breathed from every page of the New Testament.

In discussing this matter our first question may very appropriately be, Are the objectors sure they clearly understand what is the spirit of Christ, and the true nature of the love he enjoined? This is the *crucial* point in this whole discussion, to which the writer invites the special attention of his readers.

The word *love* is used in the new Testament in two distinct senses—(1) as an *emotion* or *feeling*; (2) as a principle or *choice*, called, respectively, emotional love and moral love. In the former sense it is used in 2d Cor. 5:14, “The love of God hath been shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost,” in the latter sense in the divine law, “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart”; “Thou shalt love thy thy neighbor as thyself”; “Love your enemies”; “Love is the fulfilling of the Law”; and generally in the New Testament. Though these two kinds of love usually, not universally, accompany each other, and often so blend as to be hardly distinguishable in consciousness, they are *widely* distinct, and a greater mistake is hardly possible than to confound them. They are phenomena of different mental faculties, one of the sensibility, the other of the will. One is utterly devoid the moral element, never an object of obligation. There is not a command in the Bible which can be either obeyed or violated by emotion of any kind,

while the latter, moral love, includes and exhausts all obligation. Nothing in the universe is required of a moral being, other than to love. It is "the *whole* law and the prophets," "The fulfilling of the law." Love is the synonym of virtue, holiness, righteousness, religion pure and undefiled. The human mind never recognizes, nor can it conceive of any obligation other than to love.

Can it be that emotional love is holiness or any part of it? A mother in the city in which I reside discovered her little child playing on the railroad track, while the train was coming on with terrible speed. She made a frantic effort to rescue her darling, but failed. It was crushed to death, and they took that poor mother home a maniac. Here was love stronger than death. How gladly that mother would have died to save her child! So far as that love was emotion, was it that *holiness* without which no man shall see God? If so, no man, and not even the lower animal, is destitute of it.

Does feeling of any kind constitute holiness? The ancient Jews evidently thought so. "They took delight in approaching unto God as a nation that did righteousness." The voice of their religious teachers was to them as "a very lovely song of one that hath a pleasant voice, and can play well on an instrument." Yet they were awfully wicked. So to-day thousands believe, and thousands at the altar of God teach, and thousands are cherishing such emotions as proof of their title to mansions in the skies; and going up to their great account victims of a terrible deception. Almost any emotion toward God may, for a season at least coexist in hearts in awful antithesis to the authority of God. There is no more sin or holiness in our emotions than in the clothing we put on. Obliviousness to this truth is "Christianity's millstone."

This is perfectly consistent with the truth that real attachment, emotional love for God and for his Son Jesus Christ, is the offspring and the best evidence of a sanctified heart, and in value above all price. They

constitute the peace of God passing understanding here, and the unending awards of the hereafter. But they are rather a gift than a subject of command, an experience rather than an exercise. It is unphilosophical to require them, as an effort to feel is the best way to preclude feeling.

How preposterous is the idea, that the one supreme imperative of the moral world, including all others, requires feeling; and how doubly preposterous the idea that feeling meets and exhausts all obligation; that all that mother, of whom I have spoken, owed her child, was feeling for it, and this is all the claim a dying world has upon the church, or God has upon his people. Is it *emotion* the divine law enjoins or is it *good will to being*?

Does the command, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself," in other words, thou shalt love all men up to the degree thou lovest thyself—or all men equally—mean thou shalt feel the same affection for the brutal depraved man you do for the little toddlings that gather round your table and

your hearthstone? Obedience to such a command (1) is not possible. (2) We do not owe such men our affection. (3) Conferring them would be conferring no favor. (4) God does not love them in this sense. He's "angry with the wicked every day." A command to be born in the moon would be just as feasible and just as rational.

But this is the love our critics find in the New Testament, and charge the Old with being incongruous with it. We admit the justice of the charge. The sacred writers of the Old Testament never indulged in that kind of maudlin sympathy that assumes God is too good to punish sin and maintain order in his domain.

We come to the supreme question, *What is love?* Christ defines this word so frequently and so distinctly it would seem impossible to mistake its meaning. "This," he says, "is the *love of God, that ye keep his commandments.*" Again he says, "This is the *love of God, that ye walk after his commandments,*" "He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, *he it is that loveth*

*me.*" He gives us the meaning with unmistakable distinctness in the parable of the man who on his way from Jerusalem to Jericho fell among thieves. In this picture we have *love* personified in the good Samaritan, and *selfishness*, its opposite, personified in the priest and the Levite, and *feeling* has nothing to do with either.

But more distinctly still, if possible, we have love presented in Luke 6:27: "Love your enemies. Do good to them that persecute you; bless them that curse you, and pray for them that despitefully use you." Again, Luke 6:35: "Love your enemies and do them good, lend never despairing, and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the sons of the Highest, for he is kind to the unthankful and the evil." This is love in the New Testament sense. It crops out in perhaps an hundred places in the Word of God. The New Testament is ablaze with it. It is the spirit of Christ and of heaven, and of those "spirits of bliss who bow their bright wings to a world such as

this." It is the spirit of self-sacrifice for the welfare of others.

Love is a *choice*, I have said; of *what* is it the choice? But one answer is possible, but one thing in this universe is worth choosing. That is *good*. This includes *all value*. The great Edwards defines love as "The choice of good to being in general." *Love* and *benevolence* are synonyms, the former the Bible, the latter the scientific name for the same thing. It is consecration to the work, the only work in which God engages, that of filling every heart that pulsates with joy, and every mouth with song. There are two ways of accomplishing this great result. In other words, love has two modes of expression, (1) promoting good, (2) repressing evil. We have an illustration of one in the prayer, "Father forgive them for they know not what they do," of the other in the denunciation, "Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell. Fill ye up therefore the measure of your fathers." Both of these are expressions of love—the one as fully

and as truly as the other. They are both the legitimate outgushing of a supreme devotion to the welfare of being.

We find another illustration in the verdict of the great day. To the one class it is, "Come ye blessed of my father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." To the other, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels." Every thoughtful mind must recognize these two verdicts as expressions of the same spirit, made in the interests of the highest good—equally the outbreathings of love; perhaps of the two, the latter is the greater—at least it costs the greater sacrifice of feeling. In a thousand instances the voice of the Judge has grown husky and tremulous, and the tear has started as he pronounced the sentence of death upon a fellow-man, but never when he pronounced the verdict of *acquittal*.

Are we quite sure the doom of the Canaanites was not the outcome of love, and the demand of the highest good? and shall we

denounce it as unwise and cruel, and reject the Old Testament for ascribing it to divine agency? Are the critics aware that calling their extermination unwise is an assertion that it was not demanded by the highest good? and that it is arrogating to themselves more knowledge and wisdom than the world will give them credit for? How do they know what are the demands and exigencies of a kingdom which reaches out over immensity and eternity?

The presumption is God was the author of the overthrow, and will frail man, the child of yesterday, sit in judgment upon Him who is from everlasting to everlasting? The insect perched upon the dome of St. Peters, criticizing that vast structure, is a philosopher compared with that man.

We can safely challenge any man to put his finger upon any act, or upon the approval of any act ascribed by any sacred writer, to God, which can be shown to be detrimental to the highest welfare of being. This is the only standard by which the divine ways can be judged. On the pre-

sumption the Bible is the word of God, he who objects to the morality or wisdom of anything ascribed to him, assumes himself to be wiser than the Ruler of all worlds.

Perhaps the objection urged against the Bible having most influence, is the alleged spirit of revenge which breathes through much of the book, notably through what are termed the imprecatory Psalms, the spirit, which of all others, is the most perfect antithesis to that of Christ and the New Testament. Can there be, it is asked, any wider contrast than that between the prayer, "Father forgive them, for they know not what they do," offered in the agony of crucifixion, and that of the 69th Psalm, "Let their table become to them a snare. Let their eyes be darkened that they see not. Pour out thine indignation upon them, and let thy fiercest anger overtake them, for they persecute him that thou hast smitten." Or the imprecation of the Hebrew captive, "O, Daughter of Babylon, that art to be destroyed; happy shall he be that rewardeth thee, as thou hast served us, happy shall he

be that taketh and dasheth thy little ones against the stones."

But is it not conceivable that these prayers, so diverse apparently, still are outgushings of precisely the same spirit? an insatiable, overmastering longing for the overthrow of violence, cruelty and wrong, and the establishment of "Peace on earth, and good will among men?" We know but little about the provocations which extorted the language of such Psalms. They came from hearts weary, and sick, and broken, under daily oppression and wrong unendurable. The latter, probably both, were written during the captivity, when men and women and little ones were ground to the earth, and fed on bread

"Such as captive's tears  
Have watered many a thousand years."

What can so wring a mother's heart, as to tear her little one from her arms and dash it against the stones? No language can exaggerate such cruelty. Is the prayer wrong, that God will rid the world of such monsters? Who did not pray, who pray at

all, that H. H. Holmes, that incarnation of murder, might be brought to condign punishment; and that all such creatures as the Sultan of Turkey and the Captain General of Cuba, should be made an example which shall make the ears of men tingle.

The truth is, the more benevolent a man, the more of the spirit of Christ he possesses, the more intensely he hates wrong, and the more earnestly will he pray for its overthrow, and for the reign of righteousness and peace. It is possible to interpret such Psalms as expressions of hate and ill will, but not necessary, nor logical. The best canons of interpretation require that a book, if it can be done without violence to its language, shall be construed into harmony with itself. Is this worst interpretation in harmony with the book "ordained to preach good tidings to the meek, to bind up the broken hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are in bonds, and to comfort all that mourn?" Where else can be found such sublime conception of God?

such incentives to purity and truthfulness ? Where else are falsehood, hypocrisy and cruelty more emphatically denounced and discouraged ? and by what other law so severely punished ? And where else is such protection thrown around the stranger and the poor, or such longing breathed for human welfare ? It would be gross injustice to translate those imprecatory Psalms into expressions of revenge and hate.

It is the *fact* of the *divine authority* of the Old testament which differentiates it from all other books except the New, and gives it a value surpassing human thought. The Apostle refers to the Old Testament, when he speaks of the exceeding great and precious promises ; for example, the promise in Isaiah 42:16, "I will bring the blind by a way they know not, and in paths that they know not will I lead them ; I will make darkness light before them, and crooked places straight, and I will not forsake them." What is it worth ? If human, nothing ! If divine, solar systems are poor in comparison. Isaiah 53:6, "The Lord hath laid